Yoghurt made at home the easy way

with the Deva Bridge Yoghurt Maker

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Yoghurt

made at home the easy way with the Deva Bridge Kit

by Peter Bradford

How I came to make yoghurt 2
The recipe 5
Varying the recipe 7
Technical background 9
Yoghurt in the diet 11
Cooking with yoghurt 13

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How I came to make yoghurt

I have made yoghurt for my own needs for almost thirty years. During this time I have tried many different methods of making it, my interest being to find the surest way of obtaining the best flavour and texture with the least fuss. The result is the kit now supplied by Deva Bridge House.

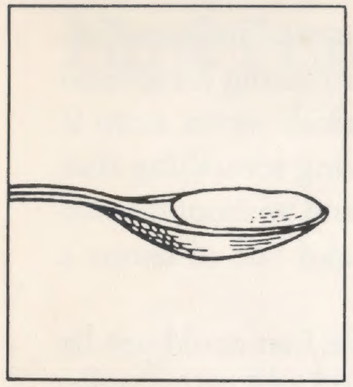
My interest started when I was first taken to a Turkish restaurant in London and tried fresh yoghurt. It was plain, with a natural covering of cream and had been made that morning. I was immediately attracted by its fresh sweet taste. I asked the waiter where I could buy it. He told me how easy it would be to prepare for myself, and that the scraping I had left in the bottom of the glass in which it had been made and served was enough to start me off to make my own yoghurt for a lifetime. I went home and tried his simple instructions, and they worked. It was unbelievable that anything tasting so good could be made so easily and cheaply.

Since those early days I have continued making it at home for my family and friends, and have seen its popularity grow and develop from a 'crank' food into one on sale in food shops everywhere. I now wonder why so many people are prepared to pay more for what, in

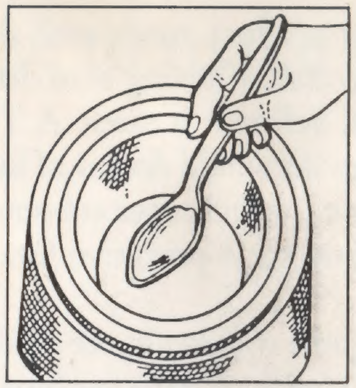
most cases, is an inferior product, made with skimmed milk and inevitably no longer really fresh – having been deteriorating for several days, sometimes weeks, before it is eaten. A Turkish writer sums it up: 'No Turkish housewife would dream of buying something that can be made three or four times cheaper at home and without trouble – it is a primitive method for a primitive food and one of nature's blessings to mankind'.

The principle of yoghurt making in the Middle East could not be simpler – take a tiny quantity of fresh yoghurt and add warm milk, keep it warm and it's made – well sometimes. Why not always? Much that I heard and read about yoghurt suggested that there was more than a touch of magic about it, including the mysterious property of inducing long life for the regular eater. But what was it about yoghurt that made it 'tricky'? I knew that it was 'alive' like yeast, and that it had to be handled with 'respect', but I did not immediately discover what kind of respect it needed to ensure success every time it was made.

This booklet tells you how to make a constant supply without experiencing any of the disappointments I had in my early days. For those who may be interested in the scientific reasons for the endlessly repeatable success of the recipe, there is information in the section 'Technical Background'.



1 One teaspoon of yoghurt is the 'starter'



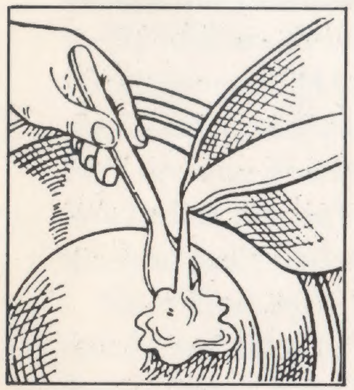
2 Put into the insulated jar

3 Put milk-saver and milk in saucepan

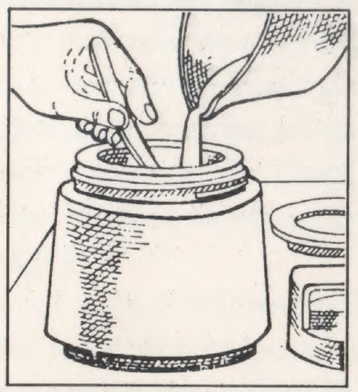
4 Simmer milk for a few minutes

5 Leave to cool . . .

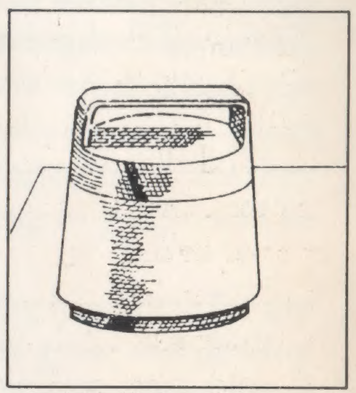
6 Until the thermometer shows right heat



7 Mix a little milk with the 'starter'



8 Stir in the rest of the milk



9 Cover, leave for five hours and it's made

The recipe

You will need a teaspoon of natural plain yoghurt (any commercial make will do), one pint of milk (two if you have the litre size) and a saucepan, plus the milk-saver, thermometer and insulated jar supplied with the kit. The insulated jar has been tested to ensure an excellent culture.

Put the teaspoon of yoghurt—the 'starter'—into the insulated jar. Then put the milk-saver and the milk into a saucepan. Simmer for two or three minutes. The milk-saver rattles a warning just before the milk boils, immediately reduce the heat and let it simmer. Remove from heat and stand the thermometer in the cooling milk; leave till the temperature falls to the higher band on the thermometer. Stir the milk with the thermometer to get a true reading. If the milk temperature falls below the lower band, put it back on the heat again for a moment until the reading is correct. Add about a tablespoon of this warm milk to the starter yoghurt in the jar, mix thoroughly, then add the rest of the milk, gradually at first and with a good stir.

Put the two lids on the jar, and leave undisturbed for five hours. By then the milk will have become yoghurt and the jar can be uncovered and put in the refrigerator to be kept fresh till wanted.

The yoghurt so stored will keep for a fortnight, but the flavour deteriorates after about three days. It is at its best served at room temperature a few hours after it is made.

Use a teaspoon of this yoghurt to start a fresh jar of yoghurt, and continue this process indefinitely. Having two insulated jars has obvious advantages in maintaining a regular supply.

It is very important that all the utensils are really clean. The warm milk is to provide a good 'nursery' in which the yoghurt culture is to grow and you do not want other unwelcome bacteria to make themselves at home. It is better to rinse anything that is to come into contact with the yoghurt than to mix in the remains of soap or detergent from the last wash. A trace of disinfectant is likely to stop all growth so do not use it in your cleaning process.

After two or three makings of yoghurt you will find the flavour improves. This is because commercially bought yoghurt is often kept for many days, during which time it develops an acid flavour. (It is probably for this reason that fruit flavoured yoghurts sell well, the fruit flavour masking the often unpleasant acid taste of 'old' natural yoghurt.) Home-made yoghurt eaten fresh is naturally sweet, and many people enjoy it without extra sugar or jam. If you want to flavour your yoghurt always do it **after** the yoghurt is made. Nothing must interfere with the milk while you are turning it into yoghurt.

Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk, and milk and cream mixture, make very good yoghurt. UHT milk is less likely to allow the whey to separate; as it is more sterile it need not be simmered first, just brought up to the higher mark on the DBH thermometer.

Varying the recipe

Although you will come back to the basic recipe, trying something different certainly highlights the qualities of the everyday method. The 'royal' variant is to use a pint of single cream instead of milk. It only needs to be just brought to the boil; do not simmer it. Then let it cool and go on with the usual method. The taste and quality are beyond description. Try it with a sprinkling of demerara sugar. Do not risk eating it alone; for good health it should serve at least four!

If you need to avoid cream altogether, use fresh milk (not homogenised), pour off the cream and make it up to the full pint with more milk. Then use the standard recipe.

Commercial yoghurt is usually known in the trade as 'stirred yoghurt'. If the yoghurt is stirred it avoids the whey separating when the solid curd is broken. Freshly made yoghurt is like a fine and fragile honeycomb; once the structure is broken it never looks the same again. Do not be concerned when your own yoghurt separates into curd and whey – it has not 'gone wrong'. Nutritionally it is the same, but its appearance is less appetising. The commercial method of getting over this difficulty is simple and the result is more bland. To make your own stirred yoghurt start by mixing thoroughly two or

three heaped dessertspoons of powdered milk with a little ordinary milk. Then add the whole pint of milk, simmer, and continue the standard recipe. After four hours stir the made yoghurt until it is smooth. Then put it in the refrigerator.

For a 'caramel' yoghurt use evaporated milk. If you use all of a large tin add water to make it up to a full pint. Then simmer. Even two or three tablespoons of tinned milk added to fresh milk makes a marked and pleasant change.

To make fruit yoghurt never interfere with it until after it is stirred because the acidity of the fruit can upset the growth of the yoghurt. The easiest way is to stir in Ribena or Rosehip syrup or jam, added according to taste. Real or tinned fruit can be chopped (or liquidised for complete smoothness) and then mixed with the yoghurt. Commercial fruit yoghurt is often most successfully made with synthetic flavour to 'support' the real fruit. Try using flavours sold for milk-shakes and fruit syrups. Children usually appreciate these additions, particularly when they have been introduced to eating yoghurt through the commercial makes. Add cream and honey to make a party sweet.

Although it is possible to use fruit-flavoured yoghurt to start new yoghurt (the fruit flavour will not be passed on) it is better to keep some plain yoghurt for the new starter.

Technical background

Although you can go on making your own yoghurt from your own recently made culture for years, I usually start afresh each time I come back from holiday, once or twice a year. The commercial firms go to immense trouble to get a good balanced culture because they are making hundreds of thousands of pints a day. Nevertheless a standard work on dairy produce says, 'We are still largely at the mercy of the idiosyncrasy of the culture as far as flavour is concerned.' I think they have more problems in the big dairies than you will have at home.

The laboratories run by industry and educational establishments have carried out much research into the subject; there are two micro-organisms that work together to turn milk and cream into yoghurt – Streptococcus Thermophilus and Lactobacillus Bulgaricus. These are naturally found together along with many other organisms in fresh milk. If milk is kept warm it will sour because other lactic acid forming bacteria will be the first to grow. Therefore it is necessary to start by boiling the milk to stop or slow up the growth of unwanted organisms. In the Middle East they arrived, by trial and error, at what they considered to be the best yoghurt by simmering long enough to reduce the original bulk by one third. The Lactobacillus also grows

better in milk that has lost most of its oxygen, so the simmering has two advantages.

Lactobacillus Bulgaricus grows best between 113°F and 116°F (45°–47°C). Streptococcus Thermophilus grows best between 98°F and 108°F (37°–42°C). What actually happens is that the Streptococcus Thermophilus is the first to start growing and then the late starter Lactobacillus takes over. It was not until I understood this that I realised the kind of 'respect' needed in making yoghurt. This led me to make many more tests resulting in the kit and recipe supplied by Deva Bridge House. It was established that if one mixed a little of the milk with the culture when it was about 120°F (49°C), the higher band on the thermometer, and then poured it into the container which was at average room temperature, it would cool the milk to just above 110°F (43°C), the lower band. From here the controlled heat loss of the insulated container enabled an excellent culture to grow. If you make your new culture over and over again with milk that is too hot or too cold you will change the balance of the micro-organisms so much that you will lose the excellent flavour and texture. All you need to do is to buy a new carton of plain commercially produced yoghurt, use half a teaspoon and off you go again.

It is interesting to note that commercially it is normal practice to use 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ of culture to inoculate the new milk. In my recipe $\frac{1}{2}$ a teaspoon of culture is recommended to inoculate one pint. This is equal to less than $\frac{1}{2}\%$, resulting in fewer extraneous organisms present. Some will always exist under practical conditions, but if the period is only a few days between making each new lot then no problems should arise.

Yoghurt in the diet

When yoghurt was first introduced in Britain it was recommended for its 'therapeutic' properties. It was claimed that the population of the Middle East countries, where it was a traditional part of the diet, was usually long lived, and that this observation was backed up by laboratory isolation of the Lactobacillus Bulgaricus in yoghurt which they said must be 'the bacillus of long life'. This theory, linked with the claim that it promoted 'regular' habits, attracted people who were interested in the real or supposed needs of their health. More recently the reactions of a much wider public against processed food has increased the appeal of yoghurt because it's a natural food. This modern trend has been reinforced by its 'slimming' appeal.

Although Metchnikoff's 'long life' theory is not now scientifically acceptable, it can still reasonably be said that yoghurt does help to promote long life if it is slimming, since we know that obesity puts additional strain on the heart. Whether yoghurt is slimming or not depends on how it is used. Plain yoghurt eaten without sugar is obviously less fattening than yoghurt flavoured with fruit syrups. Since your home-made yoghurt can be eaten freshly made you will find it sweeter, and not want to drench it with sugar. To replace your

usual bowl of cereal, sugar and milk at breakfast by a bowl of your own yoghurt will also aid slimming. So will replacing ice-cream or custard by plain yoghurt at lunch or supper. It is surprising how sensitive one's taste becomes to the natural sweetness of food once the habit of adding sugar has been broken. The claim that yoghurt is 'healthy' rests partly on the fact that modern living with its small amount of physical exertion does not go well with the high calorie puddings that most of us were brought up to tuck into. Yoghurt helps us to give these up without the feeling that we have been deprived of a 'sweet'.

The further claim that has been made for yoghurt – its digestibility – is still valid. As the Supplement to *A Dictionary of Dairying* by J. G. Davis puts it: 'There seems little doubt that some people find cultured milks more easy to digest than ordinary milk. . . . When digestion of cows' milk is difficult, this is often due to the ability of cows' milk, which is high in casein and calcium, to form a clot in the stomach. Any process which results in a preliminary coagulation of the milk solids in a finely divided curd before it reaches the gastric juices of the stomach will naturally assist digestion.'

Often when I have returned home late having missed a meal I find yoghurt enables me to end the day satisfied.

Cooking with yoghurt

Once you are making a regular supply of yoghurt try using it in the preparation of other foods. Those who have been introduced to it commercially may only be aware of it as a sweet course, or as an addition to sweet foods. Its distinctive flavour and texture make it ideal for the production of savoury sauces to serve with a wide variety of meat, fish and vegetable dishes.

Salad sauce

1 cup yoghurt
½ cucumber
1 clove garlic
1 tablespoon corn oil
1 tablespoon wine vinegar
Salt

Peel and dice the cucumber and sprinkle with salt. Leave for 10 minutes. Crush the garlic and add to the yoghurt. Add the cucumber and stir in the oil and vinegar.

This can be used with a mixture of shredded Dutch white cabbage and grated carrot for a Cole Slaw. It is also good as an accompaniment for cold meat and chicken, or cold cooked waxy potatoes. Very refreshing.

Fish dressing

1 cup yoghurt
½ cup chopped celery leaves
½ teaspoon garlic salt
1 tablespoon chopped chives
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon grated horse-radish
½ teaspoon paprika

Mix all the ingredients together and serve in a bowl. Pleasantly tangy with hot or cold fish.

Eggs en cocotte

Salami sausage or ham
2 eggs per person
2 tablespoons yoghurt per person
Grated cheese Salt and pepper

Grease individual ovenproof dishes. Place salami or ham in the bottom. Break eggs carefully into the dishes. Season with salt and pepper. Gently cover whites with yoghurt and sprinkle with grated cheese (leaving the yolks uncovered). Bake for about 10 minutes in oven at 360°F (Gas No. 4) till yolks are just set.

Minced meatballs

1lb mince
2 thick slices of stale bread
1 onion
2oz butter
1 cup yoghurt
Toasted breadcrumbs
1 egg
6oz mushrooms Salt and pepper

Soak the bread in a little milk (crusts removed) and squeeze. Chop the onion. Mix well with the meat, egg, onion and season. Form into small flat balls, roll in toasted breadcrumbs and fry gently in the butter turning the balls to brown all over. Add yoghurt and mushrooms. Cover with a lid and simmer for 30 minutes.

Beef strogonoff

1lb fillet beef
4 tablespoons butter
1 large onion
½ teaspoon tomato puree
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1 cup yoghurt
1 tablespoon flour
Salt and pepper

Fry the chopped onion lightly in melted butter. Cut the meat into strips an inch long and half an inch wide and add to the frizzling onions till the meat browns. Sprinkle on the flour and stir in well. Add tomato puree, mustard, salt and pepper and cook a further 5 minutes. Add the yoghurt. Bring to the boil and serve immediately.

Baked fish

1lb cod or haddock
1 onion
Bay leaf
Enough yoghurt to cover fish
Parsley
3 tablespoons grated cheese

Cut the fillet of fish into serving pieces and place in a greased open baking dish. Chop onion and parsley and put with the bay leaf in a saucepan with seasoned yoghurt mixed with a tablespoon of water. Gently stir till almost boiling then strain over the fish. Bake at 360°F (Gas No. 4) for about 35 minutes. Sprinkle with grated cheese and brown under the grill.

Yoghurt tatlisi

This unusual recipe from Turkey is well worth following to make a sweet course that seems to be enjoyed by everybody. It is definitely not slimming, and will serve 12–14 people.

1 cup yoghurt
4 eggs
1½ cups icing sugar
2½ cups self raising flour
2 tablespoons melted butter
½ teaspoon bicarbonate soda

3 cups caster sugar
3 cups water
½ tablespoon lemon juice
Whipped cream
Pralined almonds

In a mixing bowl beat the yoghurt and stir in the icing sugar and butter. Separate the yolks from the whites and beat the yolks and stir in the yoghurt mixture. Sift the flour and soda and add to the batter. Beat the egg whites stiff; fold into the batter and pour into a well-oiled 9 inch tin. Bake at 360°F (Gas No. 4) for about ¾ hour.

Put the caster sugar, water and lemon juice in a pan and bring to the boil, stirring now and then. Boil for about 5 minutes. Remove the cooked pudding from the oven and slowly pour the boiling syrup over it letting the syrup become absorbed. Leave it at least an hour in the tin before you attempt to cut into triangle shapes. Serve cold with whipped cream and pralined almonds.

To praline almonds drop whole blanched almonds into a thick pan and cover with icing sugar. Turn up the heat. Watch carefully as the nuts caramelise. Cool on a greased hard surface.

Muesli

Yoghurt is an excellent basis for Muesli and an almost infinite variety of additions can be made. I say almost because I have found one mixture that I now avoid. Nutmeg when used with orange tastes just like paint smells, so if you want to prepare a last supper for friends, now you know!

To serve four:

1 teacupful of yoghurt, mix it with
2 heaped tablespoons of rolled oats (raw porridge oats)
1 apple (Granny Smith or Cox), chop it small, unpeeled, and mix it in at once so it does not go brown
1 orange – finely grate the surface of the peel, remove the rest of the peel. Chop up the inside of the orange
2 tablespoons sultanas

Mix all together. It can be served immediately but it is better if it stands in a cool place for an hour before serving. If it is not sweet enough add more sultanas or sugar. Avoid making the texture too smooth: chopping the apple makes both the texture and flavour more interesting.

Other additions: Chopped pressed dates. Chopped dried figs. Raisins. Grated coconut. Grated lemon rind. Lemon juice. Sliced bananas. Blackberries, even half a dozen make a real difference. Chopped strawberries. Wheat germ. Nutmeg (see how to lose friends – above!). Grapes, quarter them and take out the pips; the cool transparent quality is particularly attractive if added last and not mixed in. Chopped glace fruits. Chopped stem ginger, also excellent just on its own when mixed with yoghurt.

Cottage cheese

Put the made yoghurt onto a piece of nylon stocking or muslin, stretch it over a bowl holding it in place with a rubber band. Allow the whey to drain off; a stir will hasten this. After a few hours when only the curds remain add salt. This is delicious as it is but also try mixing in some chopped chives. Or use just as it is with jam or thin slices of dates on bread, toast and crispbread.

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